1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*mazni*) or a bark-cloak (*tagkali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lowa*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*akki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[2]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 120. – Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate
342 cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in
513 various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian
241 wigwams, known as *panambakska*. They may also erect big and
343 small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

241 Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

● [834] **Sowing** From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory.

241 Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the
769 forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-akk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku kar kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemati mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

241 On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyap-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 The people of Bastar are apt to use the Halbi word *kosra* as a generic term for all grains raised by *penda* cultivation. Strictly speaking, it applies only to *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, which the Marias and Murias call *kohala*, to which they also give the same wider meaning as *kosra*. The early sown grains are called generically 'small *kosra*', and those most sown are *Panicum frumentaceum*, known as *sawa* or *ghatia* or, to the Hill Marias, as *amu*, and *Panicum miliare*, known as *sika* or *chikma*, which seems also to be the grain known to the Hill Marias as *turya-kohala*; others sown are *kodon* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) and *hikka*, a Hill Maria word which I have not been able to identify; the Bison-horn Marias, and, to a much smaller extent, some Hill Marias, also sow much *karuna* or light mountain rice. All these are sown generally without any pulses, but cucumbers, marrows and gourds are sown early near the field-houses. *Panicum frumentaceum* and *Panicum miliare* ripen generally in time for their New Eating festivals to take place at the end of Hagh (July-August); the mountain rice and other early grains are reaped a little later, at the beginning of Eranj (August-September).

Crops

The second main sowing is of the later crops known collectively as 'big *kosra*', chief of which is the true *kosra* or *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*), with which will be met *kodon*, *kang* (*Setaria italica*) and *bajra* (*Penicillaria spicata*). These are sown in Ha'i (June-July), to be harvested in Pa (November-December). No attempt is made to keep the different crops separate, and the confusion is made worse by broadcasting with them seeds of various pulses, especially *urad* (*Phaseolus radictus*; Maria, *pupal*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*), and *sem* (*Dolichos lablab*; Maria, *jata*).

The third sowing is the '*Os kosra*' sowing of a second crop in August-September on the land from which the 'small *kosra*' harvest has already been reaped. About a quarter of this is sown with '*os kosra*' millets, the remaining three-quarters being devoted to pulses, including not only varieties of the 'big *kosra*' pulses, but also *mung* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (both *Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*). This crop is harvested in Pusi (December-January).

241 834 513 The rains bring out a plentiful crop of shoots from the stumps of the trees felled for the *penda*, and before these get too big a day is appointed for all the villagers to cut and get rid of them. As soon as the ears form on the growing crops it is taboo for the men to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. This taboo remains in force until the final combined New Urad and Koqsar festival, when it is held at the end of Pusi

After sowing

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Jaṛgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-ravar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Chapter XI

The Annual Religious Ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias

796 In Chapter VII, on Maria agriculture, which was treated chiefly from the point of view of Hill Maria agriculture as being far less advanced than Bison-horn Maria agriculture, the Hill Maria festivals and ceremonies were described. The Bison-horn Marias have many more ceremonies and a much more elaborate ceremonial, and though these are as closely connected with the agricultural calendar of the year as those of the Hill Marias, they are best described here in a separate chapter than in Chapter VII where a description of them would have wrecked the balance of the description of agriculture.

It would, from the agricultural point of view, perhaps be logical to start the account of the *pandum* festivals and *weta* ceremonial hunts from the Kare Pandum of Magh month, held early in February, because until it has taken place it is *melo* or taboo to cut timber for *erka* and *parka* cultivation; in another sense, however, it is one of the last festivals of the year, for its holding also signalizes the lifting of the taboo against the reaping of the forest grass crop and of bamboos, and it follows soon after the Jata Pandum at which new *urad*, beans and pulses are eaten for the first time. The Bhimul Pandum that comes next, in the middle of February, is also designed to secure satisfactory rain for the coming year, but is not described first because it makes the account of all the *pandum* clearer and briefer to begin with those on which there is the fullest information. The Irpu or Idu Pandum, or *mahua* flowers first-fruits ceremony, which is held soon after the Bhimul Pandum, is therefore taken as the first ceremony of the year. In some parts it is combined with the Marka Pandum, the mango first-fruits ceremony; but, at all events to the south of the Bison-horn country, it is quite separate and more important, as the *mahua* tree plays a more important part than the mango in not only the economic but also the religious life of the people. The *perma* of the village fixes the day, which is always a Friday in the bright half of the month, in consultation with the headman (*pedā*) and elders about a week beforehand. On the night before the ceremony all the men observe sexual continence,[1] and in the morning assemble at the *mahua* tree in the *perma's*

The Irpu Pandum

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[1] Sexual continence is the rule on the night before every *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinia argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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them up and distributes them. The pig, cooked with rice, is next apportioned among all present and eaten.

Meanwhile some boil the rice brought by each villager, and the carcasses of the animals killed in the afternoon ritual hunt are skinned, cut up and roasted, after the head and the legs below the knees and hocks have been cut off, taken to the hut-temple of Mata and tied with ropes to wooden roof-posts in front of the goddess. The *perma* and all the men, when the meat is cooked, drink liquor and eat the meat; by that time, however, many have had enough, and carry off their share to their houses to eat later.

Women take no part in this feast and may not be present, except that they are expected to meet the successful huntsmen on their return and dance and sing in front of the bodies of the animals killed in the hunt as they are taken to the *kadri-bera*.

When the eating is over, the *perma* takes up his own packet of blood-stained seed, and hands each man his packet. They take them off to their houses, and place them carefully on the storage platform inside the *wijjalon* room of their houses.

By this time it is daylight, and they must all start out on another ritual hunt after the usual preliminary offerings to the Forest-maidens and omen-taking. If any animal is slain, the usual portions are then and there offered to the Forest-maidens on *saja* leaves in the forest, and at the end of the hunt the bodies are brought back, greeted as before by dancing women, and taken, not to the *kadri-bera*, but to a shed prepared in the village for that purpose. Sexual intercourse is no longer taboo, and the dancing that follows ends in the men getting their own back for the abuses with which the women drove them out to the hunt.

The next day they cut up the carcasses left in the shed overnight, and divide the meat; first the head, intestines and the legs below the knees and hocks are set on one side; then the man who killed the animal in the hunt is given the rest of the off hind leg and sometimes some meat from each side of the backbone, the *peda* (not in all villages), the saddle, and the *waddai*, if any, or the *kanal-gaita*[1] (again in some villages only), the liver; and lastly the balance is divided among all the men, including those who have already received privileged portions. Each takes off the meat to his own house, for the *Hara Tindana* remains-eating feast for his women, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives. But before they start this feast, one of the villagers on behalf of the village takes a cock and an egg to the priest of Mata's hut-temple. The priest sacrifices them to her, and in return restores the heads and legs tied up in the temple after the first ritual hunt. The villager brings them back

[1] Priest of the Departed, alias *pitar-gaita*. See p. 217 below.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [804] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *kanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *kanal*. The *kanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *kanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-kanal* has already been mentioned. As 614 the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *urakal* be the last thing that an individual *kanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

FIG. 1. Kunj digging-stick of iron. *Length 1' 7"*

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pude*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers cope and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *harlat* or *balla* (*dhonna* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *katuak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandapa* dormitory, and annually ignite their clearings from it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sannyās* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

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833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me. His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

833 A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me,
842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure,
833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—for here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

● 834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

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pregnancy, intercourse should cease after the fifth month: there is unanimous testimony on this point. After childbirth—so many Muria claim—a husband does not approach his wife for one, or even two, years. 'He must not go to her till the child is weaned.' This may possibly be true of a few villages under strong Hill Maria influence, but even there it seems to me doubtful. There is certainly a desire, however, to space confinements properly and 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain'. But the ground dries long before this.

Elsewhere I have heard it said that 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'—an important point, in that it places the responsibility for resuming intercourse on the woman. In Alor, the Muria said that a period of six months was sufficient, in Chandabera that intercourse was resumed when the child first smiled. In Chameli the villagers spoke of a case where a child had died because the mother gave birth to another during the lactation period of the first. 'The child drank the milk of blood.'

These 'holidays' serve a valuable psychological as well as a physiological purpose. In the ghotul, where their close and constant contact might easily make chelik and motiari utterly weary of one another, life is frequently broken up. For months the chelik go to watch in the fields, and the motiari are alone in the ghotul. The menstruating girl is not only sexually taboo; she does not come to the ghotul at all—and is all the more welcome when she reappears. The arrangement that chelik and motiari should go on separate dancing expeditions is psychologically sound, as is proved by the enthusiastic welcome they receive on their return.

VIII. Love-charms

In an atmosphere like that of the ghotul, where frustration and sexual anxiety are comparatively rare, the use of love-charms is less common than among other aboriginal people. But the Muria are acquainted with such charms and sometimes use them, though the results may not always be permanent. 'If I get a girl in this way,' said a Muria at Remawand, 'my store of rice grows less, for such a union is not a yoking of Mahapurub's house. The true yoking comes of its own accord.' It is said that 'girls won by magic run by deceit'.

The charms are generally based on simple principles of sympathetic magic. For example, at Alor the Gaita said that the way to win a reluctant lover was to pursue a pair of sarus cranes. These cranes, as is well known, always go about in pairs, and it is said that if one of them dies its mate will quickly follow suit.

> When the cranes fly up into the air one or two feathers may fall. One of these must be caught before it reaches the ground. Then offer it liquor and a black chicken, burn it, tie the ashes in a little bundle to your waist and somehow or other touch the girl with it. Then you will love each other like a pair of cranes. But this is a dangerous charm for as the two cranes always die together so if the girl dies you will die too.

Another curious charm comes from Gorma.

> When you go to relieve yourself, wait till a pig comes along to eat your excreta. Leaving your cloth undone, jump on the pig and pull out a little hair from the back of its neck or forehead. Tie the hair in your cloth and do yourself up. Wait till a Sunday, and then push the

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

In Kuntpadar, the people stressed the virtue of a democratic outlook, the estimating of everyone as equal to yourself. In Metawand, they thought more of generosity. To help a man in need and be kind to those who come to you in trouble is the sign of a good man. Courage is also admired, but not specially so. Yet it is said of Kurwal Kumoti of Palki that 'where the English only venture into the jungle armed with guns and protected by many people, he goes anywhere without a weapon and has no fear of bears or tigers'.

Is sexual morality in our Western sense an ingredient of the good man's character? When I have raised this point in conversation, the reply has always referred to forbidden relations. 'The greatest sin'—this is the view of Lakmu of Masora—'is to have something to do with your younger brother's wife. Or for a girl to have intercourse with a Ganda.' Elsewhere, in several villages, I was told how serious it was to break the laws of exogamy, to have intercourse with a forbidden relation and to commit adultery. In Masora, when I asked if they thought it wrong for the unmarried to have intercourse with each other, for a long time they could not understand the question. When they did, they answered, 'Only if he sleeps with the same girl too often: he must change'.

Here then we have a general picture of the moral qualities that are considered desirable and the vices that are deplored. Let us now come nearer to the ghotul. 'In the ghotul no sin can be committed.' This is not strictly true, but it is sufficiently true to explain the wonderful innocence and simplicity of the chelik and motiari. There is no sin in sex, provided—as I have said before—sexual relations are enjoyed with the right people, at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

Chelik and motiari must choose the right partner. They must strictly avoid the inner circle of forbidden relatives. Intercourse within the clan is forbidden, but is not regarded as very serious so long as no one knows about it and it does not result in pregnancy. In the *jodidār* ghotul, chelik and motiari must be faithful to one another; in the other, they must avoid too great attachments to special individuals. It is practically unknown for a motiari to have an affair with someone outside the tribe. One of the first lessons taught to a young girl in the ghotul is that she must avoid Ghasia, Ganda, Mahara and Lohar. It is probably safe to say that no European has ever had anything to do with a Muria girl, and I am told by State officials that in the old days when, in the more 'advanced' areas round Jagdalpur, it was the custom for the village headman to bring women for touring subordinates, this was never done in the ghotul villages of the north. I am told that chaprasis, forest guards and constables, who are sometimes such a menace to rural virtue, are never able to seduce the motiari of the ghotul, where the village dormitory remains to protect tribal honour. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that venereal disease is almost unknown among the Muria. In fact, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, has told me that in thirty years' service he had never seen a straight case of venereal disease among the Bastar aboriginals.

The rules governing the sexual life of the ghotul are strict and appear to be generally observed. Breaches of the rules are sufficiently rare to be talked of for many years and to be severely punished.

But sexual intercourse must not only be with the right people: it must be at the right time. It is tabooed before the greater festivals, before a hunting expedition, during the Pus Kolang dance and, most important of all, during a girl's menstrual period.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupal Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them". The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the mesarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilized Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Kaufmann exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Forbush, *op. cit.*, p. 361. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 366.